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PHOTOS: MEGG MUELLER

Minden and Gardnerville

TOGETHER OR ALONE, TWIN TOWNS ARE TWICE AS NICE.

BY MEGG MUELLER

Laurel and Hardy. Batman and Robin. Simon and Garfunkle. Bogie and Bacall. Synergy occurs when two equally exceptional sides join to form a whole; the result is more than just the sum of two parts but an entirely new creation. Minden and Gardnerville are separate, unique, and rich towns, and for the last four rounds of 2015 Tour Around Nevada, they have been in the Top 5 each time. This time, however, there was no mistaking the outcry for these two towns, and despite asking folks to vote for their favorite town...our readers rarely voted for just one, so congratulations to Minden, and congratulations to Gardnerville.

"They go hand-in-hand with each other," A.J. Frels, executive director of the Carson Valley Visitors Authority, says. "Along with promotions and attractions, the towns are sitting right next to each other so it's hard to know when you go from one to the other. But they just work so well together."

Settlers poured into the bucolic Carson Valley as early as 1841, but the towns took their time in forming. Gardnerville is the older sister; it was developed in 1879 when Lawrence Gilman purchased property from town namesake and early settler John Gardner. Minden began stirring in 1856, when young rancher H.F. Dangberg bought his first property. Dangberg donated land and eventually convinced the V&T Railroad to house its terminus in Minden in 1905, and the town incorporated shortly thereafter. There's just no point rushing perfection.

Like much of Nevada, many of the towns' first non-native settlers were of European descent, but Minden and Gardnerville also were home to a thriving Basque population. Today, restaurants such as the J.T. Basque Bar & Dining Room still serve a bustling clientele, while the Overland Hotel—opened in 1902 by Basque settlers—is undergoing renovations and plans to reopen as a farm-to-pub restaurant this year. The history of the Basque people is integral to the towns' futures, also.

"We're looking to see how we can bring more of that to the forefront. How that would tie into some of the things we're doing in the future," A.J. says.

No view of the future is without a look at its past; so protective of its small-town authenticity, a McDonald's wasn't built in the town (Minden) until 1982.

HOME ON THE RANGE

The Carson Valley made an obvious stop for many settlers as they migrated west. Lush, verdant fields spread as far as the eye can see against the high, jagged peaks of the Sierra Nevada and Pine Nut mountains. Farmers and ranchers are still abundant here, as they were when the valley was first settled.

The rich, fertile land is home to Corley Ranch and Jacobs Family Berry Farm, just two companies that grew successful businesses from the ground up. Blind Dog Coffee, Alpen Sierra Coffee Company, and Killer Salsa are among the other food-based companies that make the valley their home.

Ranching gave birth to the annual Eagles and Agriculture event, which gives photographers and visitors a chance to tour valley farms in order to see the raptor migration that occurs during calving season.

DOWN ON MAIN STREET

One of the reasons for the area's homey feel is Main Street Gardnerville program. Part of a national program, the nonprofit group's mission statement is clear: "Experience the Past, Enrich the Present, Embrace the Future." From flower baskets adorning light poles to a community garden, Main Street Gardnerville works to enhance the beauty and viability of its downtown area.

"Members of the community come together to make it happen

whether it's a promotional event, a special project, or through financial support," Paula Lochridge, Main Street Gardnerville program manager, explains. "If the community supports it, it thrives. Our supporters take great pride in our downtown and it shows."

Business owners and residents have come together to preserve and create the area's engaging atmosphere, and the results are catching. Minden is in the process of becoming part of the national Main Street Program, too.

Above: Jobs Peak looms over the Carson Valley. Below: The GE Family Concert Series in Minden Park is a huge draw each summer.



In It Together

The complementary aspect of Minden and Gardnerville is as much by design as serendipity. For special events, such as Carson Valley Days, Christmas, or Fourth of July celebrations, the participation is carefully blended for maximum fun.

"Gardnerville will do a run in the morning and the chalk competition," A.J. says about the Fourth of July party. "Then Minden will do a parade around the park. They work together."

Although team spirit often rules, each town has features that make it a stand-out in its own right.



PHOTOS: MEGG MUELLER

MINDEN

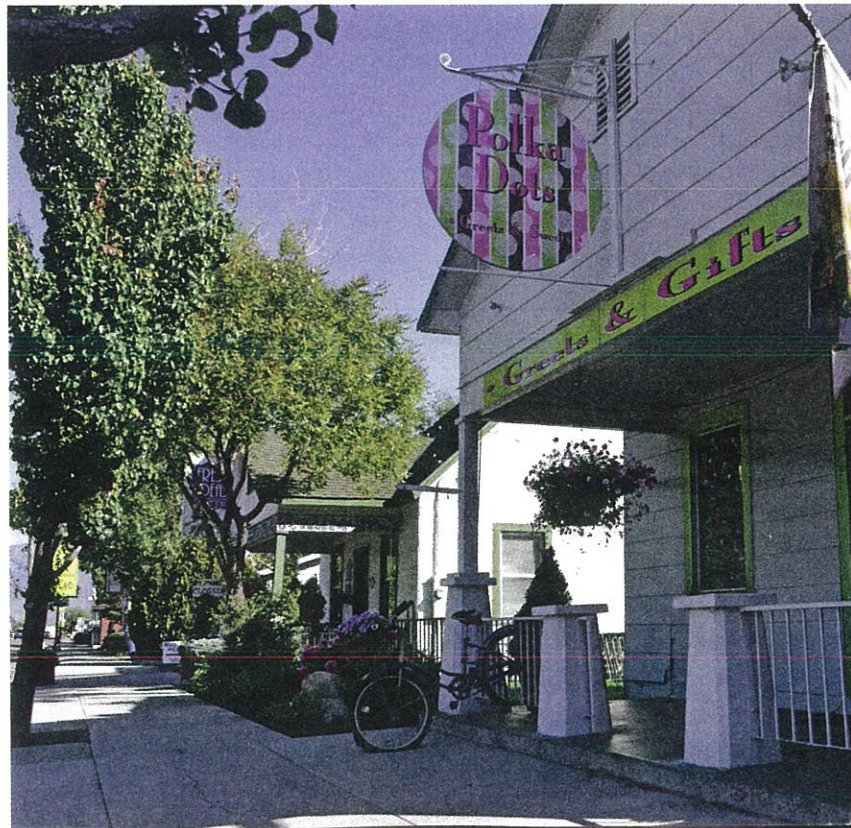
Minden is home to the Dangberg Home Ranch Historic Park, where four generations of Minden's founder lived. Much of the family and Carson Valley history has been preserved, and the ranch today has a park where live music and many other events happen during the warmer months. The Minden-Tahoe Airport is a general aviation airport that is home to some of the country's best soaring, thanks to unique thermal patterns and the outrageous views afforded by the valley and Lake Tahoe. Minden Park—located in the center of town and the heart of its social gatherings—hosts strong performance and visual arts as well as summer concerts in the park. The Carson Valley Inn—one of the larger casino-hotels in the area—is in Minden, as is the C.O.D. Casino—built in what was the oldest car dealership in Nevada.

GARDNERVILLE

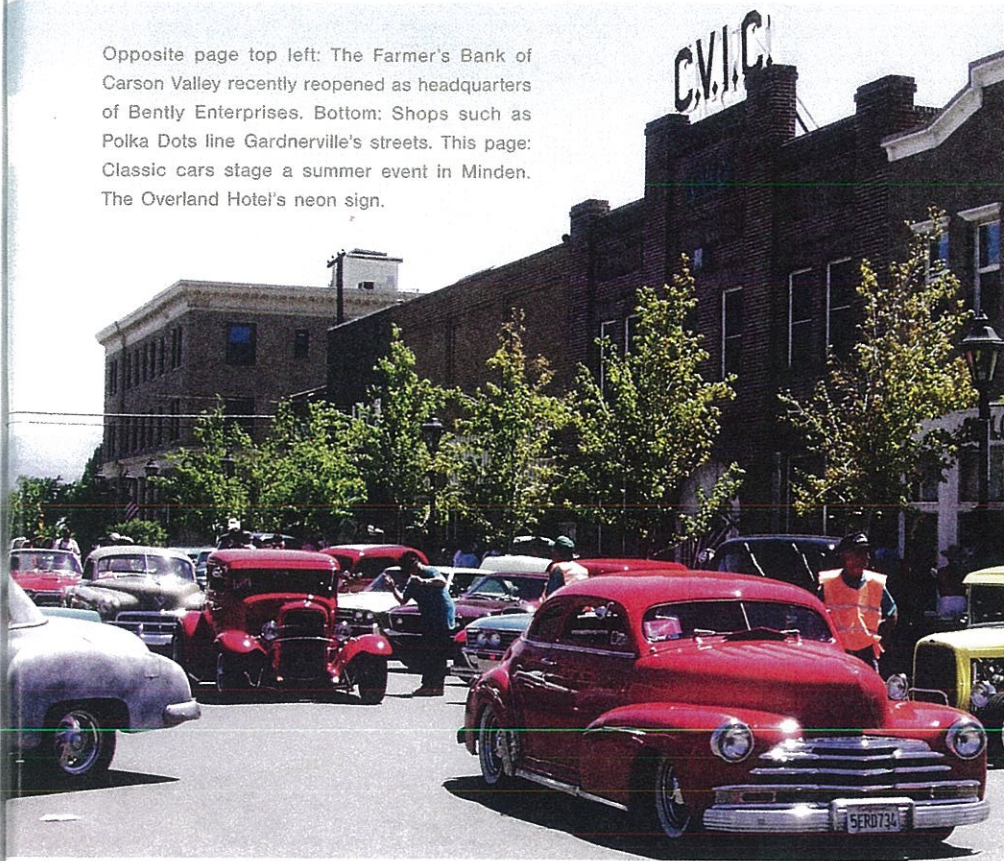
Special events are no stranger to Gardnerville's Heritage Park. Movies in the Park; Blankets, Burgers & Brews; Oktoberfest; and Carson Valley Christmas Kickoff are all held here. Gardnerville's Main Street is packed with boutiques that offer treasures not found at big box shops, like the more than 250 wines at Battle Born Wine shop, or a piece of history at one of the four antique shops. Gardnerville is also home to the recently revamped Sharkey's Casino.

From the views to the small-town feel to the history and the charm, Minden and Gardnerville have an appeal that is undeniable. For A.J., however, the appeal is something much more organic.

"People ask me what the best asset is in our area. It truly is our people," A.J. says. "We have gorgeous scenery and mountains but it's really our people and the love for the Carson Valley."



Opposite page top left: The Farmer's Bank of Carson Valley recently reopened as headquarters of Bently Enterprises. Bottom: Shops such as Polka Dots line Gardnerville's streets. This page: Classic cars stage a summer event in Minden. The Overland Hotel's neon sign.

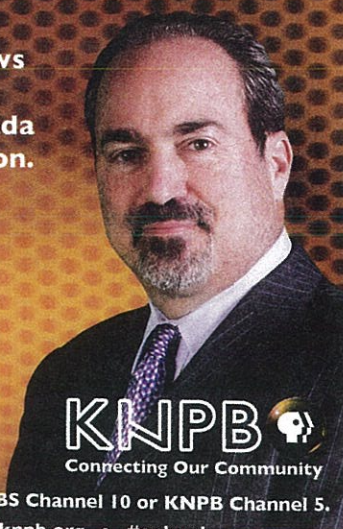


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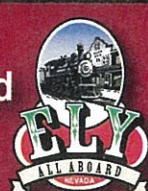
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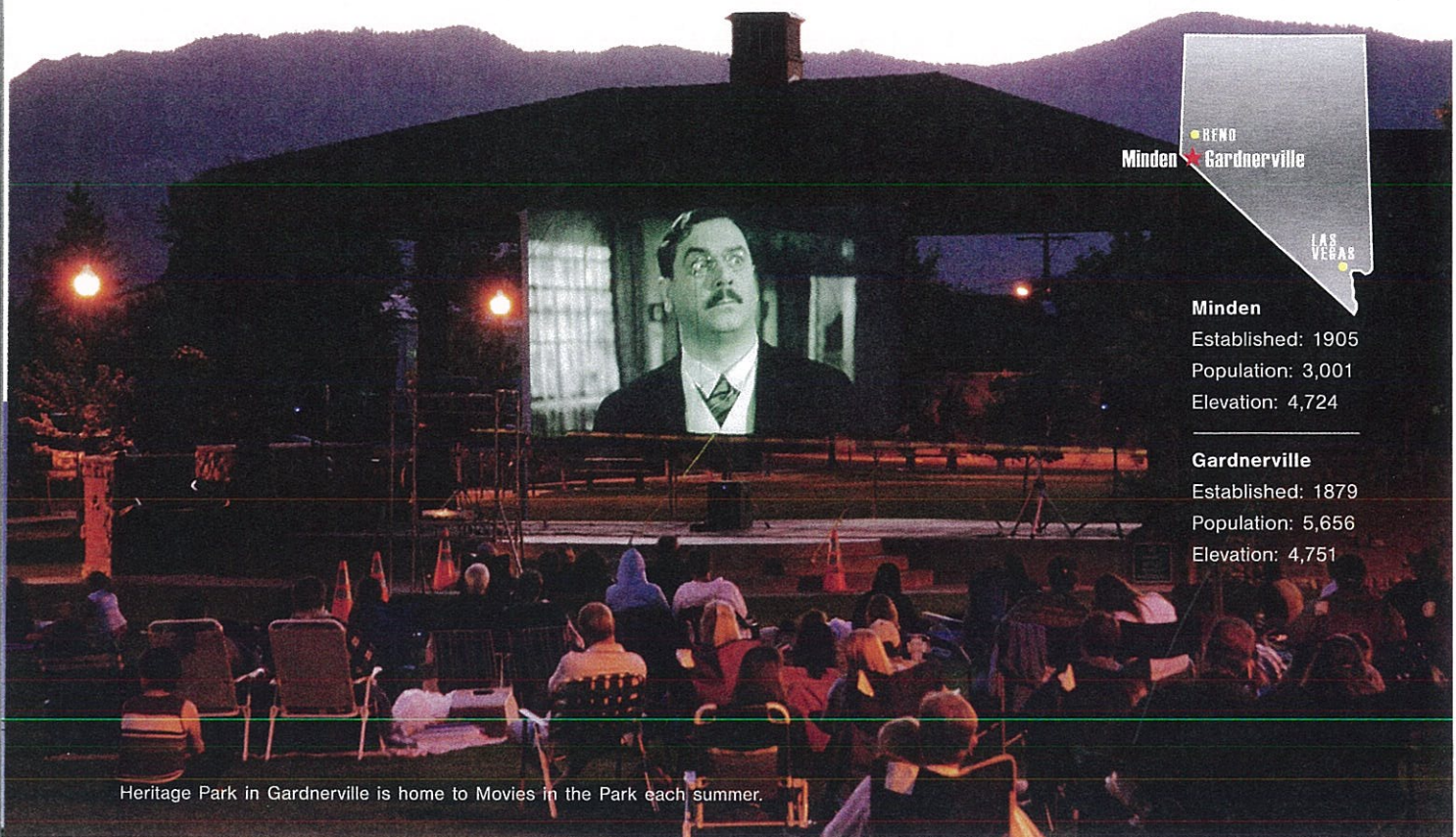
August
21-23
White Pine County Fair and Horse Races



Ely Rod Run (Ely's new car show!) August 15

**White Pine County
Tourism & Recreation Board**
150 Sixth Street, Ely, Nevada
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Heritage Park in Gardnerville is home to Movies in the Park each summer.



Minden

Established: 1905
Population: 3,001
Elevation: 4,724

Gardnerville

Established: 1879
Population: 5,656
Elevation: 4,751

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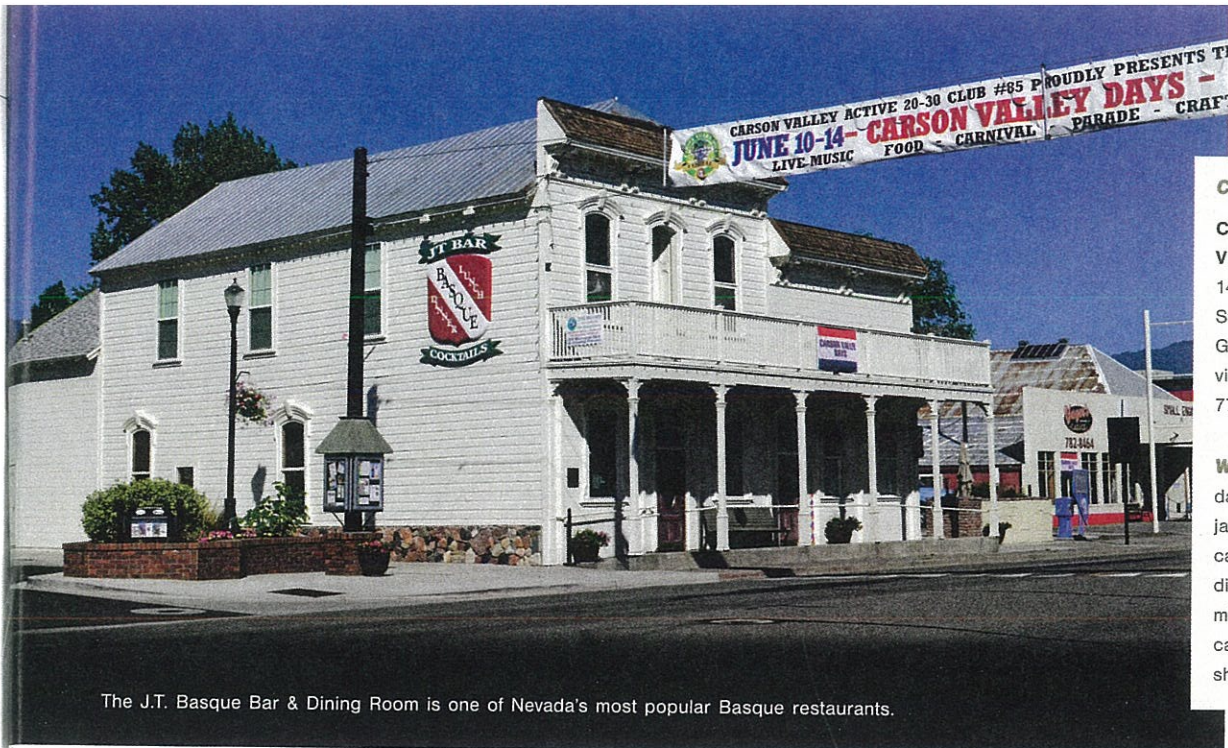
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CONTACT

**Carson Valley
Visitors Authority**
1477 U.S. Highway 395 N.
Ste. C
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MEGG MUELLER



Nevada Magazine will visit one Nevada community per issue and present the town with a Tour Around Nevada plaque and commemorative cover. The towns covered are determined by reader vote! Send your vote to editor@nevadamagazine.com with the town and "Tour Around NV" in the subject line. Ely, Las Vegas, Reno, Tonopah, Minden, Gardnerville, and Virginia City are excluded. Voting for the September/October 2015 issue closes Friday, July 10.

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CARSON VALLEY

NEVADA

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Congratulations to Minden Gardnerville, winner of Nevada Magazine's "2015 Tour Around Nevada" award!

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Gardnerville Thirsty
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18th Annual Tractor
and Engine Show

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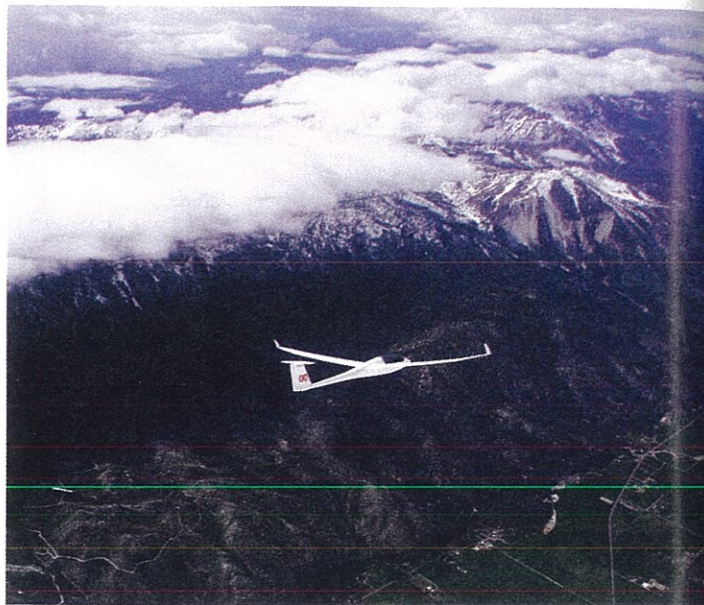
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MINDEN AND GARDNERVILLE:

THE TWIN TOWNS

One more day. It's something many vacationers and travelers wish they had, but seldom take even when they do. It's no secret that we're all busy, and getting back home a day early can make getting ready for the week that much easier. But staying just one more day can mean the difference between a quick glimpse and a comprehensive experience. So take the time to live your adventure to the fullest, and do something special on your one more day. You owe it to yourself.



If you find yourself in Minden or Gardnerville and you're looking for a one-more-day idea, give these a try:



HIKE, RIDE, FLY

carsonvalleytrails.com
riderplanet-usa.com
soaringnv.com
visitcarsonvalley.org



HIKING:

Fay-Luther/Jobs Peak Ranch Trail System: This trail system connects the Fay-Luther and Jobs Peak Ranch trailheads, which are three miles apart. The system features approximately nine miles of loop and connector trails to choose from. The Interpretive Loop provides informational signs about the area. The trailhead can be accessed from two different locations on Foothill Road.

OHV AREA:

Gardnerville Ranchos Gravel Pits: Located off Tillman Road, this OHV area consists of a large gravel pit and play area. The locations contains novice terrain for young riders to learn on, as well as some more challenging pits with steep climbs and bigger jumps.

GLIDER FLIGHTS

Located at the Minden-Tahoe airport, Soaring NV takes adventurers to the skies to experience high-flying views of the Carson Valley and surrounding areas. The company offers everything from leisurely glides over Lake Tahoe to the Tahoe Wild Ride—a 30-minute ride that takes participants on loops, rolls, and inverted flight.